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Effective Teaching Strategies for Open Enrollment Honors and AP Classes

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A trend is emerging to open enrollment for honors and AP classes to all students who wish to take them. Teachers of these open enrollment classes may be facing several dilemmas. How can the high standards and academic rigor of the course be maintained? How can students who struggle to learn be supported in their endeavors to keep up with the course content and pacing? What specific strategies can teachers use to meet the wide variety of learning needs in open enrollment classes? This article describes compensation strategies for students who may be struggling to keep up, as well as opportunities to work more independently for the most advanced students in a class.

Nationwide, there is a trend to open enrollment for honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes to all students who wish to take them. The motive for this trend is to empower students from minority groups and students of poverty to have access to courses that often lead to higher success rates in college. This trend is a distinct departure from past practices that have limited enrollment in these classes only to students who had demonstrated, by various criteria, that they were prepared for the rigor of advanced courses. Teachers of these open enrollment classes are often facing the following dilemmas: How can the high standards and academic rigor of the course be maintained? How can students who struggle to learn be supported in their endeavors to keep up with the course content and pacing? What specific strategies can teachers use to meet the wide variety of learning needs in open enrollment classes? This article offers some solutions to these dilemmas.

Most students who have trouble with learning are primarily visual and/or kinesthetic learners for whom a lecture and discussion mode of teaching is frustrating and not likely to lead to successful learning outcomes. They may be characterized as "global" learners, who learn best from the whole back to the parts, and respond favorably to the use of visual organizers and hands-on learning experiences. Lecture and discussion approaches favor students who are auditory learners and are comfortable with logical, analytic, and sequential learning tasks.

When visual-global students are in advanced classes, you as their teacher, have a basic choice to make. Will you continue using only the methods that have worked for the majority of your students in the past and not provide the support visual-global students need to be successful with the curriculum? Or, will you assume, with me, that more students can experience success with the standards if the methods used are compatible with their learning style strengths? And, if you choose to accommodate their needs, how can you maintain the rigor in the course?

In some advanced classes, the only difference when compared to regular classes is a larger amount of work. Advanced classes often require more reading, more written assignments, and more assessments, rather than greater intellectual challenge. This situation increases feelings of frustration for some highly capable students. Their frus-

tration often manifests in their refusal to do the assigned work, yet they may be able to do well on quizzes, tests, and other assessments. They sometimes dominate class discussions, but may hand in little or none of the daily work or homework. They may also lack enthusiasm for "going above and beyond" the expectations of the regular classroom. Their implied message is that they can learn the material without doing the actual class work and assignments.

Many highly capable students are driven by perfectionism and a fear of failure. They may set extremely high—often unreasonable—goals for themselves in order to always be first and best. If they are productive, they may actually do more than the assignment requires. They are rarely satisfied with their work or the grades they are given. Any criticism or anything less than the highest grade may lead them to feel inadequate and discouraged.

The strategies in this article are extremely effective for students who, for whatever reasons, may be working below the expected levels of classroom performance. The strategies are organized into three sections: (a) What can be done *before* the material is taught to be certain all students are ready to learn? (b) What can be done *during* the teaching of the material? and (c) What can be done *after* the material has been taught to help students be successful with assessments? The strategies are intended to be used by any students who might benefit from them. It is not your job to match strategies to specific students. Rather, it is beneficial to have a variety of strategies available from which students can choose. This article provides useful and practical information about many such strategies.

Before the Material Is Taught

At the outset of any unit of study, begin with what is called a "global overview" of the content. For global learners, it is essential to provide this overview of all the unit content at the beginning of the unit, preferably with a visual aid that will allow students to get the big picture of the entire unit, as well as a working knowledge of how all the parts of the unit fit into the whole. There are several ways to do this.

First, provide a survey of all upcoming material. If it is a unit from a textbook, walk students through the various parts of the text, noticing salient features such as titles; words in bold print or italics; pictures, charts, or graphs; and sections for questions. During the survey, and working with designated discussion partners, students ask questions about the features they notice. It is not necessary for them to actually answer the questions. The very act of asking the question alerts the brain to notice the material later in the learning process.

If the content is a novel or play, invite students to watch a video of either the entire source or selected parts before reading. In this way, visual students can keep visual images in their brains as they read and learn the material. However, keep in mind that auditory learners may like to predict what is coming as they go along with the text, and seeing the entire story before reading may reduce their motivation to read the selection at all! Students who feel this way might not be required to participate in the viewing.

Another strategy that can be used before students learn new content is the KWPL strategy, which works to alert the brain to focus on the most important content to be learned. The KWPL strategy is a four-step process, three of which are done prior to learning new material. The K represents what students already *Know* about the topic, the W represents what students *Want* to know, and the P represents what they *Predict* will be learned. The L represents what has been *Learned*, and this step is postponed until the entire unit has been completed. The KWPL itself is simply a four-column chart, in landscape format, with one of the words at the head of each column. It is illustrated in Appendix A.

Working with their discussion partners, students brainstorm and complete the K, W, and P columns, one at a time, before any material is taught. Each student has his or her own chart that may contain different information than that recorded by his or her partner, but the partners still work together on these columns of information.

After students have had time to brainstorm, call on them to share what they know. You will record their answers on a large group chart. Use different colors for each column. As students respond, disagreements will occur. For example, in brainstorming what we know about the Civil War, one student may state that slavery was the main cause of the war. Another student might challenge that statement. This topic then moves into the second column of the chart, as a question to which the answer is sought. "Was slavery the main cause of the Civil War in America?" Later, students and the teacher suggest other questions that need answering.

Working independently, each partner then writes his or her own prediction regarding what he or she thinks the answer to each question will be. As students learn the material, they will record what has been learned in the L column. Because it is fun to check out one's predictions for accuracy as the learning progresses, there is an emotional connection to the required content, which increases the likelihood that material will be remembered.

Finally, other graphic organizers can be used during the learning process so visual/global learners will better understand how all of the information fits together. Consult the Reference and Resource section at the end of this article for specific examples of these organizers.

When Material Is Being Learned

The Name Card Method

The Name Card method is, in my experience, the most effective method to empower all students in a mixed-ability class to remain engaged and to understand all the material being taught. This method provides the following outcomes: (a) minimizes blurting out and other attention-getting, discussion-controlling behaviors; (b) ensures nearly total participation in all discussions by all students, thereby making it impossible for any student to choose to hide from total participation; (c) eliminates teaching behaviors that may accidentally communicate ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, or gender bias to any students; and (d) greatly improves listening behaviors because students need to hear every word said by the teacher and by their peers in order to avoid repeating answers already given.

The Name Card method incorporates many proven strategies for engaging all students, the most prominent of which is the Think-Pair-Share method (Lyman, 1992). You ask a question, and students are given 10–15 seconds to *think* of their own answer. They then take 30–60 seconds to talk to their designated discussion partner (*pair*) to generate multiple answers to the question. Be sure students know the signal you will use to regain their attention. Students then *share* what they have discussed when you call on them using a stack of 3 x 5 cards you have prepared, with one name on each card.

Choose one class to be the pilot group for this method. As you add classes, simply create another stack of name cards, using cards of a different color for each class. Tell students you will not use the cards until they have had a chance to first think of the answer themselves and another chance to confer with their designated partner. Explain that they should answer loudly enough for the whole class to hear, because you will not be repeating anyone's answer. Tell them also that they should not repeat what others have said, and that no one can say, "I pass." Because students will have time to confer with their partners, it is highly likely they will have an answer when you call on them. Note: A common concern is that students will get off task during pair time. If you consistently keep the allotted time to under a minute, students will stay on task. During their pair time, you should walk around among the students to monitor the process.

Partnerships last for the duration of a unit. Create the discussion partners in the following manner:

1. Pair your "blurters" with each other. They will enjoy each other's off-the-wall thinking, and feel someone who values the way their mind works has heard them. This makes them feel less driven to make sure you hear their every thought.
2. Pair students who are having trouble keeping up with students who like to help others.
3. Pair all other students so there is some discrepancy in performance, but never pair students from opposite ends of the performance continuum together.
4. Never pair struggling students with each other, and never pair them with the academic leaders of the class. Students who are not fluent in English should be paired with a fluent English speaker who has a helpful personality.

In order for these outcomes to be achieved, basic rules of discussion must be changed. During discussions, students work with assigned discussion partners. No one is allowed to pass when his or her name is called. However, it is perfectly acceptable to say an answer mentioned by one's partner in the *pair* part of the method. Students are not allowed to pass so that they will listen well and stay engaged. Students are not allowed to repeat answers already given. You as the teacher must avoid repeating students' answers. When we repeat, we make it easy for students to hide or to not listen to the discussion.

When a student tries to pass or repeats an answer already given, simply state that passing or repeating is not allowed, and invite that student to confer with his partner again while calling on someone else. Be sure to return to that student for his answer in a few moments. In this way, you are communicating high expectations for engagement and learning success.

Never put the card on the bottom of the stack when you are done with it. Just slip it into the middle of the pack. In this way, students will not be able to disengage by knowing that you are going to call on everyone else before returning to them. Also, students who have already been called on will not be able to relax.

Always call on several students to share before commenting or giving your input. Just receive student responses in a nonjudgmental way. Simply nodding your head, saying "OK" or "Thank you" is all the response needed at this point. When you show that you will receive multiple responses to the same question, students do not stop thinking about the question even after someone else

has answered it. They know their name card might be next and they'll have to come up with a reasonable response, as well. Students soon learn that hand-waving, noise-making, deep sighs, rolling eyes, or other behaviors they use to get your attention will not change your selection of students to participate, because the cards will determine who will be called on during this first phase of the method.

Using the name cards, call on students to share what they have discussed. When you call on a student, he or she may share any response the partnership came up with, as long as no one else has already given that answer. Receive several answers to the same question.

Next, for the benefit of students who enjoy sharing their deep wealth of knowledge, and as another safeguard to prevent blurting, ask, "Does anyone have anything to add that has not already been said? Raise your hand if you do." Make it very clear that students may only add to the discussion; they may not repeat what has already been said. If they do repeat, they forfeit their right to add anything more to the rest of this particular discussion. (This method encourages students to listen carefully to the contributions of their classmates.) They can continue to participate in the discussion, however, because their name card stays in the stack. Students who have tended to dominate discussions in the past are now in a very satisfying situation. They get to tell the answers to all of the questions to their partners, and they always have the opportunity to add additional information to a discussion during the time you ask for people to add comments or information.

To ensure that this method delivers its promised outcomes, please consider the following guidelines:

1. Do not look at the cards before asking a question. If you do, you will try to match the question's level of difficulty with your perception of the student's ability. This action sends a clear message about the level of your expectations for that student, whether high or low. Because you have paired struggling students with supportive partners, it is acceptable to ask challenging questions of all students.
2. Do not show the cards to the students. Periodically, you may want to call on someone other than the person whose name card you pull—such as a student who is getting very impatient to participate.
3. Once you call on a student, stay with him until you get a response. Do not ask anyone aside from his partner to help. Wait 10 seconds (no more), and if the student has not responded by then, you might try to coach him. Provide a clue or hint, offer a choice between two alternatives, or refer him to his partner. If you do the latter, always be certain to return to the student for his response within 60 seconds, so he knows you have confidence in his ability to respond.

Variations During "Think, Pair, and Share" Time

Think. Dr. Frank Lyman (1992) has also created a thinking matrix called Thinktrix™. The Thinktrix uses seven categories of thinking: recall, similarity, difference, cause-and-effect, idea-to-example, example-to-idea, and evaluation. *Recall* asks students to tell what they remember. *Similarity* asks students to look for ways in which ideas, people, or events are similar. *Difference* asks students to find ways in which ideas, people, or events are different. *Cause-and-effect* challenges students to demonstrate that they understand the causal relationships of events, behaviors, and/or ideas. *Idea-to-example* asks students to give specific examples of ideas being discussed. *Example-to-idea* asks students to draw conclusions, make summaries, explore themes, and explain rules, to show they get the big ideas. Finally, *evaluation* asks students to explain and support their opinions, judgments, and other types of assessments of the material being learned.

Pair. There are also several ways in which students can vary the time they spend as they pair. They can: (a) take turns teaching each other what the teacher has just taught, (b) explain their own thinking about the concepts being learned to their partner, (c) identify the category of thinking from which questions come, (d) write about what they have learned as a pair, (e) read aloud certain passages to each other, and (f) review information for upcoming tests.

Share. Finally, there are several ways in which students can vary the ways in which they share. They can: (a) speak, (b) read, (c) act out their response, (d) describe ways in which new information is linked to concepts already learned, or (e) vote for their preferred response with a signal suggested by the teacher (Lyman, 1992).

If you already use a Socratic method where students enter into discussions without being called on, you might use various elements of the Name Card method, including the variations described above, to improve students' attending and participation behaviors during those discussions.

Refer regularly to the W and P columns of the KWPL chart to demonstrate which specific information students *Wanted* to learn has been covered and how well their *Predictions* were.

Other Effective Strategies to Use

Use graphic organizers during all lectures and discussions. Take time to fill them in as you speak, and to allow students to process the information they are receiving on

their own copy of the organizer. Two forms that facilitate this process are the 3S TN (Qs) method (see Appendix B) and the Content Organization Chart (see Appendix C). These methods allow you to continue your lectures and discussions as usual, but make it much easier for visual global learners to follow along and remain engaged. Students who are already taking notes successfully in other formats would not be required to use the visual formats instead.

The 3S TN (Qs)

The 3S TN (Qs) method is a variation of other split-page note-taking methods. Students have a blank copy of a form that has two columns. The left column takes only one third of the available space and is labeled "Topics." The right column takes up two thirds of the available space and is labeled "Details." The lecture or discussion is stopped every few minutes while you use the name cards to call on students to select an important fact to be remembered, which is listed on the left side of the chart. Discussion partners confer to decide the details to enter about that fact or concept on the right side of the chart. Use the name cards to get feedback from the class, and record on your chart, for all to see, what you consider to be the most appropriate responses.

Students may use this tool to study for assessments, so you have some quality control that students are learning the material correctly. Discussion partners can study together, using two sheets of blank paper, each one covering one column of the chart. Partner A uncovers the first fact, and Partner B predicts what has been written about it in the right column. Partners take turns until all topics are covered. Both columns are covered again and the information in the detail column is uncovered, one at a time, as students take turns predicting the fact that each detail describes. In this way, all students are studying accurate data, and will be better prepared for any assessment.

The Content Organization Chart

Another strategy that can be used while material is being presented is the Content Organization Chart. Discussion partners each have their own chart at their desks, but work together during the data entering steps. As you lecture, you suggest or students predict the topics to be entered in each figure. Rather than working at the overhead projector, it is better for you to enter your data on a large paper chart so that each figure can also be presented in a different color. Each time a topic is entered, students confer with their partners to enter three details, written on lines emanating from a particular figure. Use the name cards to collect data for your master chart. Students are free to adjust their personal charts to include information from your master.

Vocabulary Attributes Chart

The Vocabulary Attributes Chart (see Appendix D) is a method that helps students who have trouble memorizing vocabulary. Using this graphic organizer with four sections, students chart information about groups of vocabulary words that share similar attributes. Some section titles that work for all words are: part of speech, synonyms, antonyms, and brief definition. When students learn their vocabulary words in this visual manner, they are much more likely to remember them than if they simply look up the definitions or create sentences using the designated words.

Study Guides and Extension Menus

Another method to use during the learning phase is a combination of study guides (see Appendix E) and extension menus (see Appendix F). These methods were designed for highly capable students who resist doing the assigned work, yet have the capacity to perform well on assessments. This challenge can be met to the mutual satisfaction of yourself and the student by allowing faster pacing with a study guide to learn the required content, and facilitating independent study as alternative assignments from an extension menu for each unit. Please see the resource list at the end of the article for sources for already prepared extension menus.

Try these two methods first with just one class, and as your comfort level increases, add other classes. These methods can increase the productivity of some of your most frustrating (and frustrated) students without significantly increasing your own workload.

The Study Guide Method. The Study Guide method helps you to capitalize on your advanced students' exceptional learning abilities by inviting them to move through the required content at a faster pace than their classmates, getting full credit for their knowledge mastery without necessarily having to do all of the required assignments.

You may already have study guides for most of the units you teach. To convert them into a study guide that will serve more independent learners, you only need to add the required assessment dates. When advanced students are not working on required assignments, they work instead on a related topic of interest that they have selected from an accompanying extension menu. All students are required to experience the same assessments at the same

time. What you are differentiating is simply the amount of regularly assigned work that advanced students are required to do.

Please note that there are no pretests in this method. Because the content is quite new for students, a pretest will only invite them to cram, rather than to learn at a pace that is more likely to lead to long-term mastery. Students simply learn the material described on the study guide at their own pace, but experience the class assessments together with the rest of the class.

Identifying students for the Study Guide method. One way to help students decide if the Study Guide method is right for them is by describing the characteristics and abilities they need to be successful with the methods. It is best to do this during the unit you are currently teaching so students can plan ahead about wanting to try to use the Study Guide method. Explain that students who are likely to do well with the Study Guide method are those who: (a) are good independent readers, (b) enjoy reading and doing research independently, (c) maintain a B or 85% average or higher on formal assessment during the present unit, and (d) wish that required content could include topics in which they have a personal interest.

Please notice that "turn in all homework" is not listed as a necessary criterion. If you stipulate that students who want to try the Study Guide and Extensions Menus options must have turned in all of their homework for the present unit, you will automatically eliminate many students who would greatly benefit from these methods, which were actually designed primarily to entice nonproductive highly capable students into being more productive in class.

The idea of exempting some students from regularly assigned work may make you uncomfortable. You may worry that they will learn poor work habits, or that other students will resent what they perceive as "special privileges." Consider why you create assignments in the first place—to help students learn the material. With the Study Guide method, you have documentation that students have learned the required material, and they are held accountable for demonstrating that mastery on your timetable. It's the alternate work they do that has a more flexible format. It is the faster pacing that makes them (and their parents) happy.

Two ways to use the Study Guide. You may use the Study Guide alone or in combination with the Extensions Menu, as discussed later in this article. The first option is the simplest. The guide itself is the differentiation tool; students use it to study other topics related to what the whole class is learning. For example, if the class is studying a unit on the mythology of ancient Greece and Rome and some students already know a lot about that topic, group those students together and invite them to use the Study Guide to learn about the mythologies of other ancient civilizations. Likewise, if some students have already read a book you will be using for an example of a certain genre, the Study Guide can structure their reading of other books by the same author, or other books in the same genre.

The second option invites students to develop an expertise on a topic related to what the whole class is learning. They choose a topic from the Extensions Menu (or get your permission to select one of their own), pursue it in depth, and later report on what they learned to the class or another appropriate audience. This option expands the unit and makes it more interesting and enjoyable for everyone. Using Extension Menus also allows you to reintegrate interesting content and activities that you may have given up because they were not tied directly to the required standards. In all cases, students are expected to master the same required standards as the rest of the class, and they are held accountable with regular assessments along with other class members. However, they can learn at a faster pace and spend the balance of their time in school on activities from the Extension Menu that are more challenging and rewarding for them.

Preparing the Study Guide and Extensions Menu.

1. List eight required standards you want all students to master by the end of the unit. These standards will be described on the Study Guide for this particular unit. Note that these will be the same standards or categories you will use in the Content Organization Chart described earlier in this article and depicted in Appendix B.

   In another column, list topics related to the unit theme but not included in the required standards list. These may be topics you would want to include if you had unlimited time for this unit, or topics you think would appeal to students with interests that extend beyond the unit parameters. These topics will turn into descriptions of independent study options on the Extension Menu for this particular unit.
2. Create a Study Guide that includes only the required standards. Advanced students will use the guide to learn the standards at their own pace during some of the time in which you are teaching the unit directly to other students who benefit from more structured instruction. Because there will be no pretest, some students who might choose to try this method will not be successful with it. Therefore, I strongly recommend that the first checkpoint occur no more than 3 days after the students begin their work. This way, it will be easy to notice if some students have made an

inappropriate choice and should return to the group that is working directly with you.

3. Create an Extensions Menu that includes the eight related topics (see Appendix F). Leave the center space free for student choice. Use a thinking model of creative and/or critical thinking with which you are comfortable to make sure the activities stretch students' learning experiences. Describe the specifics of what the students should learn, but not the specific ways students should present their findings. They can choose their own products from a list you provide. In this way, students will not reject an extension idea simply because they do not like the product you have suggested. Students do not have to work on more than one topic if their ongoing work meets the conditions described on the Independent Study Agreement (see Appendix G).

Other Tools to Use With the Study Guide Method

The Independent Study Agreement. The Independent Study Agreement (see Appendix G) is designed to prevent any misunderstandings or disagreements between you and students involved with these methods. All students who choose to use the Study Guide method, with or without the Extensions Menu method, must enter into an agreement with you that describes the conditions of their independent study, including both learning and working conditions. If students fail to meet the conditions, the consequence is that they will have to return to the teacher-directed group for the remainder of the unit. Describe clearly all conditions you expect students to meet in order to maintain their more independent path through a particular unit. Take a few minutes to explain the expectations, and ask students to initial each item to indicate their agreement with its expectations.

The following is an explanation of some of the items on the Independent Study Agreement depicted in Appendix G.

1. "I will learn independently all the key concepts described on the Study Guide." You must clearly define what this means to you.
2. "I will participate in designated whole-class activities as the teacher indicates them—without arguing." Because it may be difficult to pinpoint at the beginning of a unit the exact dates on which such events will occur, reserve the right to announce that today (or tomorrow) will be a whole-class activity. When the special event ends, the Study Guide students are free to return to their projects.
3. "I will share a progress report about my independent project with the class or another audience by _____ (date)." Students working on Extension Menu projects are not required to complete an entire project by the end of the unit. That is why their reports are called progress reports. The more often you bring the resident experts back for "special events," the less time they have to work on their project. Furthermore, gifted learners have a unique capacity for wanting to learn all there is to know about a topic of interest. If they think their learning will be limited by a timeline, they might not volunteer for the Study Guide option again. The best thing that could happen is for a student to become so engrossed in a project that he or she wants to work on it for many weeks or even months—even into subsequent units. As long as the learning and working conditions are being met, there is no reason to insist that a student stop working on a project that clearly interests him or her. You can decide if it is also acceptable for resident experts to switch to a different topic related to a subsequent unit. Remember, they are being held totally accountable for the required standards as described on the Study Guides, and for the same long-term projects required for all your students. They will be given a new Study Guide for the next unit, for which they will also be held accountable for learning the required standards.

The Evaluation Contract. Once students choose a project from the Extension Menu, they indicate their choice for a grade on the Evaluation Contract (see Appendix H). The grade earned by students using the Study Guide and Extensions Menu approach should reflect the complexity and sophistication of content and thought processes rather than the appearance of the product. It should be based on substance rather than appearance. The Evaluation Contract includes a generic rubric that may be used for any project. Other rubrics may be substituted. Please see the resource list at the end of this article for suggestions regarding available rubrics to use.

The Daily Log of Extension Work. The Daily Log of Extension Work (see Appendix I) is useful to keep records of students' differentiation experiences. The student tracks details about his or her progress in his or her independent study, completing one line for every class period in which differentiation occurred. On a three-column chart, students use one horizontal line for each day they are working on differentiated activities. The left column is for the date and the center column is to describe the portion of work the student plans to complete that day. Both are filled in at the beginning of class. The right column, labeled "What I Completed Today," is completed a few minutes before class ends, after

an appropriate reminder from the teacher. When students discover they planned more than they could complete, they make a note in the second column of the next horizontal line, which alerts them as to where to start when they return to the project. For this log to be highly effective, it should never leave the classroom. Logs can be kept in folders, color-coded by class period. The method is also helpful for students who have trouble beginning and completing long-term assignments. Breaking those down into daily goal setting experiences can lead to better tracking of the entire project.

It is important that students who work independently have access to their teacher on a regular, planned basis. You have worked hard to offer more challenging options so they can work at their own level. Therefore, they will appreciate regular opportunities to meet with you, even as a group, so you can encourage their independent study and provide other types of support they might need.

If students wish to work on part of a project at home or if parents wish to assist with the project at home, identify a separate part of the project as the "home project." Evaluate it separately from the school part of the project and suggest that the student keep a separate Daily Log at home to document the differentiated homework. This delineation ensures that students who have access to help at home will not have an unfair advantage over students who may not have similar access. Some students might try to convince you that they should be allowed to work on their homework from another class and not do the alternate work you have offered. Or, they might suggest that their entire grade should come from the formal assessments only, with no alternate work for the unit. Because you know that your content is broader than the required standards describe, simply tell the students that is not an available option. They must understand that you are offering only two options: staying with the class and doing all the work they do, or working on an alternate learning activity related to the unit you are teaching.

After the Content Has Been Taught

Strategies used before and during the presentation of new content material can be used after the content has been taught in the following ways.

1. The L column (what we have Learned) in the KWPL chart can be used after the standards have been presented.
2. Both the 3S TN (Qs) and Content Organization Chart can be used by students as actual study guides so that students who need this support may be certain they are learning the correct information for the assessments. Some teachers give students blank charts to use for a few minutes before any written assessment so visual learners can record their visual memories to refer to during the actual assessment. After several charts have been completed, student partners can use Venn diagrams to compare and contrast similar elements from several sources. For example, if the Content Organization Chart describes elements in a Shakespearean comedy, students can compare and contrast word play, which might have been one category on the chart, between *As You Like It* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*.
3. Use your regular assessment tools to determine what students have learned.

Teaching Mixed-Ability Groups in Open Enrollment, Honors, or AP Courses: Summary of Strategies

1. Collect materials for the unit at both grade level and advanced levels.
2. Provide a global overview of the entire unit, including visuals.
3. Use the Content Organization Chart or other visuals to teach the required standards to those who need much teacher direction.
4. Use visual-kinesthetic methods for direct instruction as often as possible.
5. Allow advanced learners to use the Study Guide method to learn the required standards at their own pace, and an Extensions Menu to spend some class time developing an expertise on a topic related to the required standards.
6. Use learning games to help students remember essential information. Variations on popular TV game shows, such as "College Bowl" or "Jeopardy," are highly motivating for many students.
7. Provide alternative assessment formats for students who need them.

Questions and Answers

1. "How can I possibly use these methods with short class periods and too many students?"

Consider the week as a 5-hour block rather than five 45–55 minute periods. Allow advanced students to plan goals and work amounts by the week.

Think of what happens when the needs of gifted students are not met in public schools. The students leave for charter or private schools or for early entrance to colleges. Students who leave take their tax dollars with them, so there is a serious price to pay for not accommodating high-ability students. Students who are new to open enrollment classes will benefit from these methods, and your most independent students do not feel that the pace or depth has slowed down in the class. Try the strategies with only one class until you and the students have reached a comfort level with the options. Examine the resources at the end of this article to find some extension menus that are already available.

2. "Aren't all of these strategies really pampering lazy students? Don't we all have to learn to do things we don't like in the real world?"

I know that caring teachers and parents are sincerely worried about this issue, but it cannot be addressed if the students in question drop out of school. Studies suggest that a high percentage of high school dropouts could be categorized as gifted. When we get into power struggles with these students and they leave our schools, I think no one has won the struggle. I believe the most important 21st-century survival skill is a positive attitude toward being retrained. The best thing we can do for our students is to be sure they love school so they can view changing careers and continuing their education in a positive way. Your first goal, therefore, with all students is to do everything in your power to make them enthusiastic about lifelong learning. Students at both ends of the learning continuum generally have negative feelings about school, but almost all of them remember one or several teachers who made a difference. How will they remember you?

3. "What happens if the students on independent study do not finish their project work?

Ask yourself why you want them to finish this work. In the real world, people work on one research project for years, or even decades. Because you know that students working on these projects must always be ready for the checkpoint assessments on the Study Guides, they are still actually meeting deadlines. If you require these students to participate in many whole-class activities, this further limits the time they have available to work on their projects. Always remember that the Study Guide method holds students accountable for the required standards, which are never negotiable. Make your decisions about their project preferences on an individual basis. I do think it is legitimate to hold students accountable for the progress reports as described on the Independent Study Agreement.

4. "What happens if students purposefully sabotage their results on an assessment because they really want to stop working on their projects?"

During your initial meetings with the students, be sure they understand that they should talk to you about any frustrations they encounter as they work through this method. During your check-up meetings as the unit progresses, ask students directly about their comfort level with the methods. If they are feeling overwhelmed, help them select smaller chunks to work on one at a time, rather than worrying about the entire project all at once. Show them how the Daily Log of Extension Work can help them break overwhelming tasks down into more manageable short-term goals.

5. "How can I make sure that a student's parents do not get involved in trying to influence the content or quality of the independent study project?

Interested parents can assist by helping locate information, or by taking them to museums and other sources of information. Or, a certain portion of the project may be designated as the "home part," with it's own separate Daily Log. Remember that the project is designed to be done in school so more capable students have meaningful work to do while the rest of the class is benefiting from more time with the teacher.

6. "How can I guarantee that students' independent work will be of high quality?"

The Evaluation Contract is designed for that purpose (see Appendix I). You can also use John Samara's Product Guides or rubrics that you already have, or download a variety of free rubrics from the Internet. Please see the resource list at the end of this article.

7. "What if a student doing independent study is extremely uncomfortable presenting a progress report to the class, or just refuses to do it?"

You might provide an alternate audience—another class, a community group interested in the topic, or even a private conference with you. Some audience-shy students will even play a video they have made of their report rather than doing it "live."

Summary

This article has described several ways to differentiate the curriculum in open enrollment Honors and AP Classes for students who are either significantly behind or ahead of other students in their class. Your success with these strategies is highly likely if you start small, with perhaps just one method in one class, and expand into other classes when your comfort level with these methods increases. Your satisfaction with your teaching will be positive as you discover that open enrollment classes can work effectively. Good Luck.

Reference

Lyman, F. T. (1992). Think-pair-share, thinktrix, thinklinks, and weird facts: An interactive system for cooperative learning. In N. Davidson & T. Worsham (Eds.), *Enhancing thinking through cooperative learning* (pp. 169–181). New York: Teachers College Press.

Resources

Creative Learning Press

Outstanding resources for teaching students how to do research in the same way as professionals. Creative Learning Press; 1-888-518-8004; http://www.creativelearningpress.com.

Differentiating Instruction for Mixed Ability Classrooms

Two videos help teachers provide differentiated learning for gifted students. Available from ASCD, Alexandria, Virginia, 1-800-933-ASCD (1-800-933-2198), http://www.ascd.org.

Galbraith, J., & Delisle, J. (1996) *The gifted kids' survival guide: A teen handbook*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Written with help from hundreds of gifted teens, this guide teaches the facts about giftedness, how to develop healthy relationships, how to handle stress, how students can actively participate in their own education, and more.

Graphic Organizers

Students create outlines of their course material and projects from graphic organizers provided by the software. Active Learning Systems; 1-800-877-4292; http://www.inspiration.com.

Heyerle, D. (2004). *Student successes with thinking maps: School-based research, results, and models for achievement using visual tools*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

David Heyerle has many resources of various kinds of thinking maps and other types of graphic organizers.

Lyman, F. T. (1992). Think-pair-share, thinktrix, thinklinks, and weird facts: An interactive system for cooperative learning. In N. Davidson & T. Worsham (Eds.), *Enhancing thinking through cooperative learning* (pp. 169–181). New York: Teachers College Press.

Product Guide Kits by John Samara

These excellent tools can eliminate the problem of gifted students doing shoddy work on their projects. Each guide describes all of the parts that should be included in a type of product and describes the attributes for each part. Available from the Curriculum Project, Austin, TX; 1-800-867-9067; http://www.curriculumproject.com.

Renzulli Learning (http://www.renzullilearning.com)

This new Web site offers support to students who desire independent study. The Web site helps students select their topic and provides links to other Web sites that will assist students in locating the information needed for their independent study. A fee is required.

Rubrics on the Web

For access to free rubrics or rubric software, please visit: http://www.rubrics.com, or http://www.rubistar.4teacher.org.

Think-Pair-Share SmartCard

Gives a comprehensive description of dozens of variations for the Think-Pair-Share part of the Name Card method. Available from Kagan Publishing, http://www.kaganonline.com.

Thompson, M. C. (1994). *The word within the word*. New York: Royal Fireworks Press.

Fabulous materials to support the use of classics in the classroom, as well as outstanding vocabulary development materials. Unique!

Winebrenner, S. (1989). *Super sentences*. Mansfield Center, CT: Creative Learning Press.

Vocabulary building activities for students in all grades.

Winebrenner, S. (2001). *Teaching gifted kids in the regular classroom: Strategies and techniques every teacher can use*

to meet the academic needs of the gifted and talented. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Since 1992, this has been the definitive guide to meeting the learning needs of gifted kids in mixed-abilities classrooms. Contains practical strategies and a variety of reproducibles, as well as expanded explanations of strategies in this article.

Winebrenner, S. (2005). *Teaching kids with learning difficulties in the regular classroom*. (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Contains practical strategies and a variety of reproducibles, as well as expanded explanations of strategies in this article.

Winebrenner, S. (2006). Differentiation Content for Gifted Learners in Grades 6–12 [Computer software]. Port Chester, NY: National Professional Resources.

More than 120 Extensions Menus in eight subject categories created by secondary teachers for secondary teachers. The menus are interactive, and can be changed to suit each person's preferences.

Appendix A
KWPL Chart

What We Already **KNOW**	What We **WANT** to Know	What We **PREDICT** We Will Learn	What We Have **LEARNED**

Note. From *Teaching Kids With Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom: Ways to Challenge and Motivate Struggling Students to Achieve Proficiency With Required Standards* (p. 96), by S. Winebrenner, 2006, Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

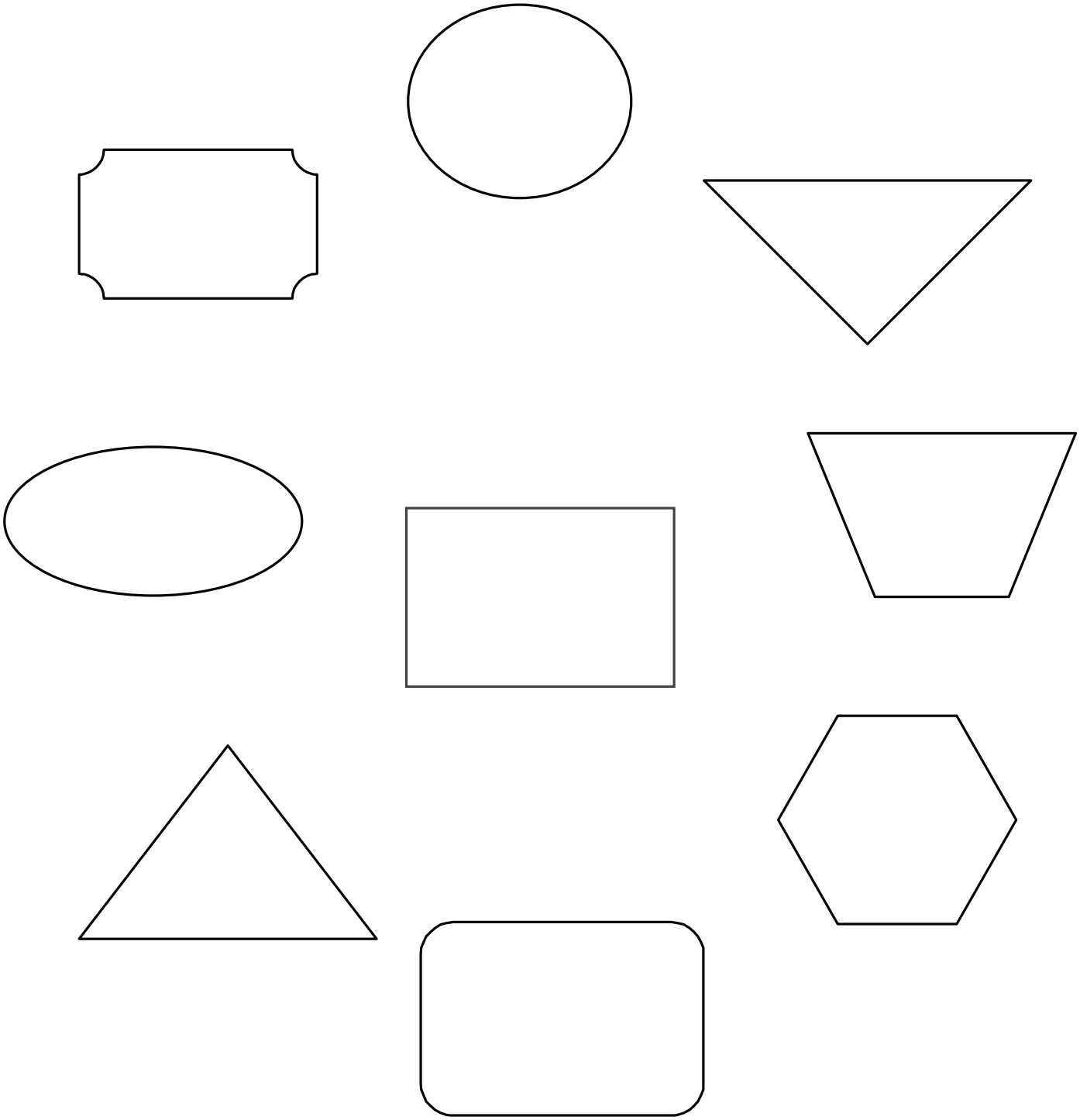
Appendix B
3S TN (Qs)

You can use this form to help you take notes and study the information for discussions and assessments.

- **S**urvey an entire selection to get the big picture. Ask **Q**uestions as you survey. You don't have to write the answers. Just think about them and tell them to your partner.
- **S**kim a small section of text at a time. Ask **Q**uestions as you skim to be sure you are noticing the most important information.
- When you find something you want to remember, **T**ake **N**otes in phrases. Constantly ask yourself **Q**uestions to make sure the information is important.
- **S**tudy your notes using the two-column strategy. Ask **Q**uestions and answer them verbally.

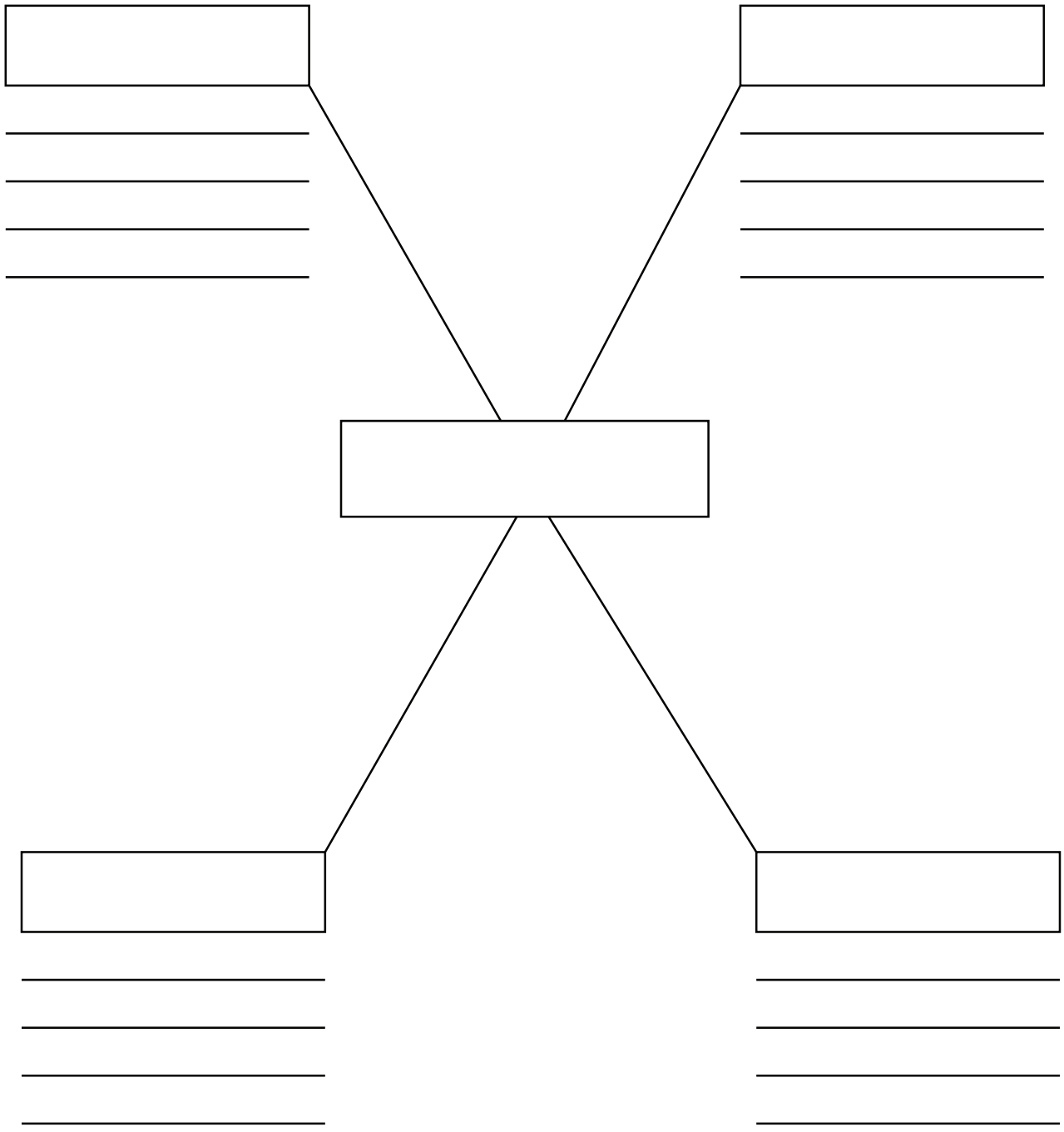
Topic	Details

Appendix C
Content Organization Chart



Note. Excerpted from *Teaching Kids With Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom: Ways to Challenge and Motivate Struggling Students to Achieve Proficiency With Required Standards* (p. 141), by S. Winebrenner, 2006, Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Appendix D
Vocabulary Attributes Chart



Note. Chart adapted from *New Directions in Vocabulary* by B. Abromitis. Carbondale, IL: Blue Ribbon Press, 1992. Used with permission. Excerpted from *Teaching Kids With Learning Difficulties in the Regular Classroom: Ways to Challenge and Motivate Struggling Students to Achieve Proficiency With Required Standards* (p. 114), by S. Winebrenner, 2006, Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Appendix E
American Wars Study Guide

BE PREPARED TO:

1. Discuss the political, social, and economic causes of the war.

2. Explain the basis of the economy for both sides before the war began.

∗ CHECKPOINT: [00 / 00 / 00]: Assessment for 1–2 ∗

3. Give the meanings of all designated vocabulary words.

4. Show on a map the disputed territory before the war began, at its midpoint, and at its end.

5. Recite from memory an important speech from this particular war period on a war-related topic. Be able to explain its background and significance.

∗ CHECKPOINT: [00 / 00 / 00]: Assessment for 1–5 ∗

6. Describe typical battle conditions experienced by soldiers and commanders. Include information about commonly used battle tactics.

7. Narrate a first-person biographical sketch of a person connected to the war effort.

8. Write a newspaper account of a non-battlefield event related to the war.

9. Describe the peace plan—its location, components, and effects.

10. Summarize the implications of this war in today's time period. Hypothesize how history would have turned out differently if the other side had won. Make predictions for the decade following the war as well as for the present time.

∗ CHECKPOINT: [00 / 00 / 00]: Final Assessment for 1–10 ∗

Note. Excerpted from *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented* (p. 71), by S. Winebrenner, 2001, Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Appendix F
American Wars Extensions Menu

Present a detailed biography of an important person during the time of this conflict. Include evidence of this person's influence during the war period.	Research the patriotic music used by both sides in the war. Point out similarities and differences. Describe how music influences patriotism in civilians and soldiers. Compare the patriotic music of this war to that of other wars.	Locate information about the medical practices used on the battlefield and in field hospitals during this war. Include biographical information about famous medical people of that time.
Discover how military people communicated with each other and with their commander-in-chief during this war. Focus on events in which poorly understood or poorly delivered communications influenced the outcome of a military effort.	**Student Choice**	Investigate battles in which creative or uncommonly used tactics were employed. OR design strategies that you think would have led to more victories and fewer casualties. Be sure to use only the technology available during that time period.
Choose 25 key words from this unit. Create a directory that lists each word, its meaning, and its effect on this war.	Investigate other types of wars: between families, clans, children in school, mythical creatures, etc. Share information about them and include a comparison of elements found in a traditional war between countries.	Create alternate ways for countries to solve their problems without resorting to warfare.

Note. Excerpted from *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented* (p. 72), by S. Winebrenner, 2001, Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Appendix G
Independent Study Agreement for Study Guide With Extensions Menu

Read each condition as your teacher reads it aloud. Write your initials beside it to show that you understand it and agree to abide by it.

Learning Conditions

_____ I will learn independently all the key concepts described on the Study Guide. I will not have to complete the actual assigned activities as long as I am working on an independent project.

_____ I will demonstrate competency with the assessments for the Study Guide content at the same time as the rest of the class.

_____ I will participate in designated whole-class activities as the teacher indicates them—without arguing.

_____ I will keep a Daily Log of my progress.

_____ I will work on an independent project and complete an Evaluation Contract to describe the grade I will choose to earn.

_____ I will share a progress report about my independent project with the class or other audience by _____ (date). My report will be 5–7 minutes long and will include a visual aid. I will prepare a question about my report to ask the class before giving my report.

Working Conditions

_____ I will be present in the classroom at the beginning and end of each class period.

_____ I will not bother anyone or call attention to the fact that I am doing different work than others in the class.

_____ I will work on my project for the entire class period on designated days.

_____ I will carry this paper with me to any room in which I am working on my project, and I will return it to my classroom at the end of each session.

Student's Signature: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____

Note. Excerpted from *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented* (p. 76), by S. Winebrenner, 2001, Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.

Appendix H
Evaluation Contract

I am choosing a grade for my project based on these criteria.

For a grade of B:

1. I will use secondary sources. This means that I will locate what information I can from several existing sources.

2. I will prepare a traditional product. I will present it using a traditional reporting format.

3. I will be learning on the lower levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge and Comprehension. This means that I will find information and be able to describe what I've learned.

For a grade of A:

1. I will use primary sources. This means that I will gather first-hand information myself through surveys, interviews, original documents, and similar methods.

2. I will produce an original type of product. I will present it to an appropriate audience using a unique format.

3. I will be learning on the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy: Application, Analysis, Evaluation, and/or Synthesis.

This is the project I will do: _____

_____

_____

_____

This is the grade I intend to earn: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____

Appendix I
Daily Log of Extension Work

Student's Name: _____

Project Topic: _____

Today's Date	What I Plan to Do During Today's Work Period	What I Actually Accomplished Today

Note. Excerpted from *Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented* (p. 78), by S. Winebrenner, 2001, Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit.